

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

Claims 1 – 10 are cancelled and claims 11-13 are currently amended.

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of the Claims:

1 – 10 (Cancelled)

11. (Currently Amended) A method of processing a polymeric tubular linear member using a mechanical caterpillar apparatus, the apparatus comprising first and second extensible traction members, the method comprising the steps of:

forming the polymeric tubular member such that there is tensile strain energy stored within the polymeric tubular member;

entraining and driving the first traction member around first and second rotatable members, said first driven traction member having an interior portion and an exterior portion;

entraining and driving the second traction member around third and fourth rotatable members, said second driven traction member having an interior portion and an exterior portion such that the interior portion of each traction member opposes the interior portion of the other traction member;

using a motor connected to each of the rotatable members by a respective drivable connection to drive each of the rotatable members such that the first and third rotatable members are driven by said drivable connections at a first speed and the second and fourth rotatable members are driven by said drivable connections at a second speed, such that the polymeric tubular member is pulled into the opposed interior portions of the first and second traction members between the first and second rotatable members and advanced towards the opposed

interior portions of the first and second traction members between the third and fourth rotatable members;

wherein the first speed is not being equal to the second speed, such that as the polymeric tubular member is advanced between the opposed interior portions of the first and second traction members, the polymeric tubular member is processed by linear compression or by linear extension depending on said speed difference in order to change the tensile strain energy stored within the polymeric tubular member ~~the processing of the linear member is effected by the difference between the first speed and the second speed.~~

12. (Currently Amended) A method of processing a linear member according to claim 11, wherein the difference between the first speed and the second speed compresses linearly the linear member in order to reduce the tensile strain energy stored within the polymeric tubular member.

13. (Previously Presented) A method of processing a linear member according to claim 11, wherein the difference between the first speed and the second speed extends linearly the linear member in order to increase the tensile strain energy stored within the polymeric tubular member.